



COUNCIL BULLETIN

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A Great Miracle Happened There



At interfaith gatherings Jews are often asked why it is that almost every Jewish celebration involves revisiting history. The answer, I suggest, is that history has shown us time and again that, even against the odds and even when confronted by mighty forces, it is possible to fight back. It is even possible to survive to tell the story. It is possible for individuals to make a difference. It is possible for women to make a difference. More than that, the struggle for survival is more than Jewish history. Israel is yet again under attack and antisemitism is ever present. And Jewish history is more than the struggle for survival. It is about Tikkun Olam, healing the world for all of humanity. We must work wherever there is injustice or oppression, for we were slaves in the land of Egypt.

The story of Chanukah began more than 2000 years ago when the land of Israel was part of the Syrian-Greek Empire. Antiochus III, the King of Syria, had successfully waged war against King Ptolemy of Egypt and Israel became part of his empire. At first he was favourably disposed toward the Jews, but once he was compelled to pay heavy taxes to Rome, the burden fell upon the various peoples of his empire. Antiochus's sons revelled in the persecution of the Jews. Antiochus IV tried to root out

the individualism of the Jews and impose a common religion and culture throughout the region.

At the same time, internal dispute between Jewish Hellenist and traditional Jews resulted in a minor civil war. The Hellenists had been placed in power by Antiochus; so the successful rebellion against the Hellenists was put harshly down. Not only did he kill thousands of Jews, he also forbade Jewish worship. The scrolls of the Torah were confiscated and burned; Sabbath, circumcision and kashrut were prohibited under penalty of death. Antiochus's men went from town to town and from village to village enforcing these rules.

In the village of Modi'in the old priest Mattathias took a stand and killed a soldier rather than offer sacrifices to the Greek gods. Instead of supporting Mattathias, the Hellenist Jews responded by attempting to worship the pagan gods. This led to Jew killing Jew and the victorious traditionalists sought refuge in the Judea hills, where they formed a makeshift army led by Mattathias's sons, the Maccabees. Antiochus sent his General Apolonius to wipe them out, but though smaller in number and less well equipped, the Maccabees won the day. When Antiochus sent out another expedition which was also defeated, he sent an army of more than 40,000 men. The people rallied behind the Maccabees who engaged in guerrilla war against Antiochus.

After an unlikely victory, the Maccabees returned to Jerusalem to liberate the Temple and clear it of the idols placed there by the Syrians. A new altar was built and the Menorah lit. Despite the fact that the only Kosher oil available was enough to keep the Menorah alight for one day, it burnt for the 8 days it took until more Kosher oil became available on the 25th Kislev 3622. This was not an overnight victory but the beginning of the reclamation of the land Israel by Torah Jews.

As so often happens, women have been seen, historically, to have had a lesser role

in the victory. However the story of *Yehudit*, the daughter of the High Priest *Yochanan* was recorded at the time. One of Antiochus's generals, Holofernes, set siege to the town of Bethulia in the land of Judea. Just when, hungry and dying of thirst the townspeople were ready to surrender, Yehudit convinced them of an alternative plan. Yehudit determined to leave the beleaguered town and, dressed in her finest clothes and accompanied by her maid who carried a basket on her head filled with rolls, cheese, and several bottles of old wine, approached Holofernes. Yehudit enticed Holofernes with her body and with her offer to act as a spy. She and her maid became trusted in Holofernes's camp.

Yehudit was called to Holofernes's tent for a feast in anticipation of the imminent destruction of the Jewish population. Yehudit brought food and wine that she said she had prepared especially for the occasion. She fed him goat's cheese, which he washed down with wine. When Holofernes collapsed drunk, Yehudit slit his throat and cut off his head. The sight of the head convinced the male army to attack the unprepared Syrian army at dawn. The Syrian army fled and this victory was crucial to the ultimate success of the Jewish rebellion.

The miracle? The oil, the unlikely victory of the Maccabees, and the survival of Judaism as a distinctive religion against the odds. Beyond this, recognition of the importance of at least one woman could itself be seen as a miracle.

Today, we must also celebrate the miracle of the survival of Judaism despite the Shoah. We must celebrate the miracle that is *Erez Yisrael*, particularly during the threat and response of Operation Pillar of Defence. Equally, we must celebrate the role women have played, and continue to play, in Judaism, in the *Galut* and in the state of Israel even in times of war.

Chag Seme'ach.

Melinda Jones

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Editorial Committee

Our thoughts are with all of Israel at this time. From afar we watch the existential threat to Israel and the cost that this has had, and continues to have.

Sharon Gustafson, President of ICJW, issued the following statement:

The ICJW adds its voice and words of support to the people of Israel and to Israel's inviolate right to self-defence. The thousands of rockets launched from Gaza by the terrorist group Hamas are threatening Israel's territory and citizens, reaching far into the country. Israel's obligation to defend herself and her people has led to a military build up and a conflict in response to these attacks. Air strikes are causing loss of life on both sides. As the threat of a ground war looms, the women of ICJW join all who hope and pray that efforts will continue towards peace and not war.

NCJWA is an affiliate of ICJW and we wholeheartedly endorse this statement.

This issue of the Bulletin looks at two current manifestations of miracles of Chanukah. On the miracle of the State of Israel, we have a young Australian woman's response to being in Israel at this time. On

the miracle of the survival of the Jewish people, we revisit the growing antisemitism in Hungary and look at the work of Jewish women in response.

The status of women is never far from our mind. The issue of sexual abuse both here and in Israel is an ongoing issue, as is the trafficking of women & children. December 2nd was International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, so we move from fair trade to slavery in this Bulletin.

Thanks again go to the editorial team of Andrea Cooper, Judy Krape and Di Hirsh. Thanks too, go to Georges and Currency Print. But mostly thanks go to you for your continued effort on behalf of Jewish women, for your hard work and for your care.

On behalf of the editorial team, I wish you good reading, a Chanukah sema'ach and a happy 2013.

Melinda Jones

Join NCJWA at the Herczeg Jerusalem Seminar for Jewish Education May 5-8. 2013.

The forthcoming NCJWA trip to Israel is timed to allow participation in the Herczeg Jerusalem Seminar, which is held every 4 years. The seminar's theme is Judaism as a Universal Language; Jewish Perspectives on Contemporary Issues. The subjects for discussion include:

- The Eternal Relevance of Judaism
- Individual and Communal Responsibilities to Others
- Jewish Communities - Unique Yet United
- The Rights of Women and Children
- Interfaith Perspectives on Contemporary Issues
- Jewish Sources as Tools for Women's Leadership
- Social Media Agents of Social Change

Reserve your place on the Israel Tour now: contact Di Hirsh President@ncjwa.org.au



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Deadline

Deadline for Pesach Bulletin
-18th February 2013
Theme: Breaking the Bonds



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President's Message



Di Hirsh OAM

The past few weeks have been very difficult for all of us. We have been constantly reading and listening to the latest news on social and more conventional media. We have talked to family and friends who have been living under the very real threat of actual missile attacks, day and night.

This is a situation not seen in Israel for decades. It has brought home to us the centrality of Israel in our lives. We pray that the ceasefire holds, children and families will no longer have to run to bomb shelters at a moment's notice. May Israel find true partners in peace among the Palestinian people one day soon.

As I write this we are currently in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. We are urged not to remain silent about men's violence against women. Learn more about this insidious crime that is all too prevalent in our society, and about how you can help stop the violence. I am heartened by the Australian Government's establishment of a Royal Commission into Child Abuse, another abhorrent crime perpetrated against our most vulnerable and precious members of society, that has debilitating lifelong effects on the victims. We at NCJWA are ever mindful of the need to speak out in support of all those affected by domestic violence and child abuse.

Please consider joining us next year when we visit our projects in Israel. We are putting together an exciting 10 day program for you, starting in Tel Aviv on 24 April with a cocktail party hosted by the Australian Ambassador to Israel. On Anzac Day we will be dedicating our most recent JNF project in Golda Park, which is part of the Anzac Trail. Make a personal connection to ILAN, the Haifa Rape Crisis Centre and Ethiopian women students at Haifa University. Take part in interfaith dialogue with women in Jerusalem. Don't miss out on this unforgettable experience. Contact me today to find out more details.

I wish you all Chanukah Same'ach. May the lights of Chanukah shine on you and your families and bring you inner peace as well as peace to Israel and all humankind.

Di Hirsh OAM

A Letter from Israel from an Olah Hadasha



Israel under fire



By Jade Kestenberg

I travelled to Israel about two years ago now. Looking back to the day where I decided to pack my bags and go it's hard to believe that I am fully integrated into Israeli society! I didn't know much about Israel, besides of course daily reports of rockets being fired, another Israeli soldier being injured, or world condemnation of some sort. I had decided to study a Midrasha program in Jerusalem that I found online. In Australia I often attended Shabbat dinners with religious families and was intrigued as to the special bond that was shared on Shabbat. There was no television in sight, no Internet or music could be heard, just the pleasant sound of people sharing their stories. I was inquisitive to learn more about Judaism.

I travelled to Jerusalem on December 16 I arrived in the very pleasant, quiet and somewhat religious community of Ramat Eshkol. The Jewish learning program ran for three weeks with women coming from all over the world

to study and learn about the torah. It was a fantastic experience and I ended up extending my time from 3 weeks to 6 weeks. Taking public transport in Israel was something I was a little apprehensive about. After a few days I gathered up the courage to get on my first bus full of children, women and elderly alike. I remember asking myself 'why would someone try to hurt these innocent people?' In no time I was travelling throughout Jerusalem using public transport and the occasional bus announcement of a potential bomb on board became something that surprisingly unfazed me. Everyone would get off the bus no screams could be heard, almost routine.

After an inspiring 6 weeks of learning Torah in one of the holiest places in the world I decided to explore Tel Aviv. I found a volunteer program for 5 months where I lived in the poorest neighborhood in South Tel Aviv, Kiryat Shalom. During my time I volunteered with the blind and taught English to Arab and Jewish children. It was definitely not the best neighborhood to live in as poverty was everywhere but the people were very warm. After a short time of living in Southern Tel Aviv I became content with the fact that there were no announcements of bomb alerts on buses or trains in this area, and aside from the occasional rocket being fired to the Southern cities of Ashkelon, Sderot and Eshkol region it seemed pretty tame.

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A Letter from Israel from an *Olah Hadasha*

I remembered speaking to an Israeli soldier one day during my volunteer placement with the blind she must have been 18 years old. She too was volunteering her time outside of her army service. I asked her about her views on the security situation in Israel and what it was like to be in the army. She told me in a very sweet voice 'It is very sad, the situation here. Most of my friends have friends that have been killed or if they don't have friends that have been killed, they have family that have, or they know of someone that was killed.' She continued 'the world doesn't seem to care about us.' I empathized with this young girl and young adults like her that has to fight wars to protect this country at such a tender age. I remembered when watching the news that seldom is it mentioned how young the soldiers who died were.

When the volunteer program finished most of the participants went back to their home countries. I decided to stay. I felt a strong connection to the land and the people of Israel that I had never felt anywhere else in the world. There is something very special about Israel.

After moving into my new apartment in Central Tel Aviv I promptly bought a gas mask and was prepared for the possibility of a nuclear attack from Iran at any point. Apart from the Iranian

security threat, I unknowingly felt safe in central Tel Aviv, after all no rockets would ever come here. Since living in Tel Aviv I had never witnessed a successful bomb attempt on a bus. I guess I was lucky. From October 22nd- until November 21st this all changed. There was an escalation of rockets fired toward Israel. The Hamas terror organization had fired a total of 1,500 rockets at Israel. I remember my first experience of running to the bomb shelter. I had arrived at work one morning in Tel Aviv and all of a sudden I heard the eerie sound of danger, a code red siren. I ran as fast as I could to the bomb shelter knowing that I only had one minute and thirty seconds to get there. Throughout the next couple of days this became routine procedure. I felt that Israel was in a state of war and even though I had the opportunity to come back to Australia, I resisted with the hope that things would improve.



The escalation of rockets and violence left Israelis feeling very tense and scared to go outside or drive on the highway. I remember calling my friends and family to confirm that they were okay, many needed moral support and assurances that war would not reign. My friend Hen living in the South of Tel Aviv shared her thoughts with me during the situation she stated; 'After a week of war anxiety, I did not go outside but stayed protected under my house (bomb shelter). I did not eat and I took my mother and I decided to take the car and drive armoured. It is such a difficult period. We must remember our pain of the never-ending agonizing war on terrorism, it doesn't matter whether North, South or central.'

A ceasefire was declared on November 21st, at 9pm sadly twelve rockets were fired into Southern Israeli cities shortly after the ceasefire was declared. Currently the escalation of rocket into Israeli cities has stopped and again the cafes and the streets of Tel Aviv are full of people. However many Israelis are skeptical as to how long the ceasefire will last. It is the hope of most Israelis that one day there will be peace and that children will be free to play outside in Southern Israeli cities without the fear of rockets being fired. We must never give up hope that this can be achieved.

By Jade Kestenberg

Thank You Hana Laor



Hana Laor has been an active volunteer since her youth. Her volunteer work began as a young nurse during the polio epidemic in 1952. Those were hard days in Israel, but Hana acted without hesitation.

She helped children in rehabilitation programs, with vaccination and equipment and at summer camps. She also helped with fundraising.

A number of years after later, Hana was asked to donate flowers from her garden to raise money for Ilan. That was the beginning of Hana's long involvement of in Ilan – an involvement spanning decades.

Hana has played a major role in Ilan and has always been at Ilan's front line. She has been responsible for establishing schools, kindergartens and other institutions needed to support children with special needs, including the Onn Kindergarten, Onn School and Venezuela Kalisher School.

Today, Hana Loar is the Chairman of Ilan in Tel Aviv, one of the most important and biggest branches of Ilan in Israel. She is also an active member of Ilan's volunteers board and special committees.

It was Hana's vision that Tel Aviv should have a Day Care Center for Handicapped Adults. The Day Centre project is one of Ilan, Tel Aviv's biggest ever projects. We are all very excited that we are now approaching completion of the building and the beginning of the fulfillment of Hana's dream.

At 88 years young, Hana is the heart and soul of all our fundraising campaigns and events. She continues in top form - she is involved and contributes to every decision.

We wish Hana continuing health: may you be with us, involved and engaged as you are, for many years to come.

Silvina Freund
Director Ilan Tel Aviv



HUNGARY: JEWISH WOMEN STANDING UP & BEING COUNTED

At football matches, on public monuments and memorials and even in the Parliament the ugly face of deep seated antisemitism has again been on the rise, crescendo-ing in recent months.

In the forefront of the response to antisemitism in Hungary is a small group of women who come together in the *Esther's' House Association for Jewish Culture and Feminist Values*.

On 26 November 2012, this group, which deals with many causes concerning Jewish women, placed the following announcement on their Facebook Page.

Here and now we have reached the point when antisemitism which has always been part of this society and which a good year ago was transferred into political antisemitism (that is at home in politics) now was elevated into state antisemitism.

This afternoon a member of the Hungarian Parliament suggested, in Parliament, that it is high time to search out all Jews in government and in the Parliament as they represent a national security risk. NO OTHER MP or the SPEAKER OBJECTED or SAID ANYTHING AT ALL, apart from Zsolt Nemet a government foreign policy secretary who said that he can't support such 'research' because the issue of the number of Jewish people in government is not really connected to the weighty Middle-East conflict.

Andor Schmuck of the Social Democratic Party said, and I agree, this is the beginning of the end and every decent person should go to the parliament building wearing a yellow star. I agree. I am organising. Who will help, who is coming. Get in touch with me please. Now.

The planned flash mob, a little over 24 hours later, on November 27, 2012 turned into a greater show of solidarity than could have been hoped for. Held in front of the Parliament in Budapest, thousands of Hungarians were reported to have packed the square, many sporting yellow stars. Speakers from every political party condemned antisemitism generally and the call for a 'Jewish list' in particular. The story of a yellow star protest even made it to the Australian news. But involvement in political protest is only a small part of the work of *Esther's House*.

Esther's House is attempting to effect fundamental change in Jewish society: to modify the current Jewish



social hierarchy and women's place in it - whether she be a secular and feminist community leader, a teller of tales, an artist, a film maker, a Jewish studies student, or a modern orthodox / progressive woman struggling for religious status in a postmodern Jewish world.

They consider that there is an urgency in dealing with these issues after more than six decades of silence about the special conditions and aims of Jewish women.

Katalin Pécsi-Pollner, the founder and chair of *Esther's' House*, writes: "We attempt to heighten the feminist consciousness of Jews, particularly Jewish women. The position of our group is precisely that Jewish women ought to strive to define themselves rather than passively accept the expectations of others."

As predominantly a group of professionals, academics and university students, *Esther's House* engages in research, hosts and participates in conferences, and holds seminars and roundtable discussions.



Of their many projects, two stand out. The first is *Untold Stories*, which has helped break the silence of female Hungarian Holocaust survivors. The

second, *Beyond the Glass House*, involves interviews with Hungarian Zionist Women in Israel.

The Editor's Forward to *Untold Stories* by *Jewish Women* writes:

For too long the Holocaust has been seen in male terms, obscuring the nature of the specific roles, work, and suffering of women. Today it seems doubly difficult to grasp what Jewish women endured, both as Jews and women, because we don't have many memoirs or personal records written by women to draw upon...

A painful void exists to today: not knowing the stories of the mothers, the grandmothers, the friendships in the camps, the connections, the survivors' difficult journeys home, an absence of literature and other pictorial representations, and the missing endeavors of the "second generation", the children of survivors.

Dr Katalin Pécsi-Pollner describes this project:

In 1944-1945 members of several Zionist groups – from the left wing *Hashomer Hatzair* to the religious *Mizrachi* – lived and rescued Jews in Budapest, mostly staying and working illegally in the so called Glass House (Üvegház), in Vadász street 29. These teenagers printed and distributed forged Swiss passports (Schutspasses) for several thousands Hungarian Jews, helping them escaping from the deportation. Some other Zionist young people collected orphan children left alone in the streets of Budapest, and they took care of them in buildings turned into

Hungary: Jewish Women Standing Up & Being Counted



Children homes. After the liberation the accomplishment – the heroic acts – of these Zionist teenagers was not honoured at all. By 1949 all the Zionist groups were considered as ‘imperialist’ and were forced to leave Hungary. These young people, arriving in different kibbutz’s in Israel, did not receive a warm welcome there either, because – comparing them with the heroic survivors of the Lodz or of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising – their acts were not considered as a kind of ‘resistance’. They were considered

instead ‘cowards’, as they did not fight with guns like partisans in the woods. So they spent almost all their lives in a ‘shadow’, keeping silent, because nobody actually was really interested in their personal stories.

While the historical and political facts of the Zionist movement in Hungary are not a taboo topic any more, we know almost nothing about the personal side of the story. These several hundred, brave Zionists were mostly in their teens, working independently, left alone by the adult leadership and their parents. Half the members of the different Zionist groups, participating in rescuing and other actions, were women. In the ideology of Zionism the equality of the women was an important starting point. Nevertheless, ‘mainstream history’ speaks only about the facts motives and

Continued

effects of some heroic actions accomplished by men – mostly by men in the leadership of their groups.

This work of Esther’s House is noteworthy. Just as the work of responding to antisemitism aims to root out that problem at a fundamental level, so too does this work seek to redress the imbalance of voice and presence between the genders. ‘Feminism’ may be seen in many circles as a dirty word, but experience teaches that without a feminist informed research agenda, half the voices are simply not heard.

Esther’s House is our counterpart, the Hungarian member organisation of the *International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW)*. NCJWA extends its solidarity to and commends *Esther’s House* in all its work.

Information supplied by Dr Katalin Pécsi-Pollner

Dr Geulah Solomon OAM – Leading by Example



It is a great honour to be asked to speak at the launch of the memoir written by Dr Geulah Solomon of blessed memory. The work is entitled *My Life, My History, My Legacy: A Jewish-Australian Journey*.

There are many here who knew Geulah for longer than I did, and for many more years than I did – family members, close

friends and colleagues. But I thought I would say a few words about the importance of this memoir, and the small but important role Geulah played in my life.

When reading the memoir I felt as though I was listening to Geulah speak. She was a great teller of tales – whether sitting in her lounge room planning a NCJWA event, or sitting in my car as I drove her to one of the many community events she participated in. Geulah told stories of her life and her community, and it is these stories which are recorded in this memoir.

The memoir tells the story of Geulah’s life – from the early days in Carlton, to her years in regional Victoria, as a student at Melbourne University, and following her marriage to Keith, as a young wife and mother in Caulfield, and her experiences in Israel and as a proud parent, grandparent and great grandparent. It wasn’t always an easy life,

and Geulah experienced great tragedy at various times, including the untimely loss of her son, Ron.

One of the things that struck me in reading this memoir is how far the reach of one person can extend. The range of people attending this afternoon’s launch is an indication of Geulah’s influence and activities within the community. I know many of the names mentioned in the memoir, and as Geulah would often remind me, there is a family connection as Geulah’s cousin Vic Spitzer married my Grandmother’s cousin, Fleur.

What comes through the pages of her memoir is that Geulah was a woman of great strength of character, determined to give the best to her family. And the love she engendered in her family is evident from the tributes of her grandchildren, which appear at the end of the memoir.

The memoir is more than a personal story. In this, Geulah’s academic training is evident. She places her life in context. In describing how both sides of her family came to be in Australia, and some of the details of the lives of her relatives outside Australia, we are given a snapshot of the 20th century Jewish experience – pre-war life in Europe, the horrors of the Shoah, the establishment of the state of Israel, and at the same time the development of the Melbourne Jewish community from the heyday of Yiddish culture in Carlton, to the movement of the centre of the community to Caulfield.

Geulah has been described as “a doer, not a talker”. In fact, I think she was both, as she knew the importance of communicating with others about her passions in life, and recording her history. But she did do more than talk – she played an active role in the

Jewish community in Melbourne, taking on leadership roles, both at NCJWA as well as the JCCV and ECAJ. There is a full list of the roles she held at the end of the memoir, and it is extensive.

Geulah also represented the interest of the Jewish community to the broader community. An example of this is when she represented NCJWA at the UN Conference against racism in 2000.

I first met Geulah in the early 1990’s, when I was a young mother, looking for a way to get more involved in the Jewish community. At the time we met, NCJWA Victoria was planning a third Seder, a women’s Seder, to explore the role of women within Judaism against the background of the Seder’s theme of freedom.

Which brings me to another area where Geulah was active – in the fight to bring about reform in the status of women within Judaism, particularly in the area of *gett* and *Agunah*.

Geulah’s sphere of influence wasn’t limited to the Jewish community. As an educator, Geulah was instrumental in establishing courses in Women’s Studies, multicultural education and programs for gifted and talented students. Her memoir tells the story of the years she and Keith spent in Samoa, and the difference she made to students there.

I would have to agree that it is by her actions, as described in this memoir, that Geulah’s legacy lives on.

Jennifer Huppert

My Life, My History, My Legacy: A Jewish-Australian Journey can be purchased from NCJWA Victoria office, office@ncjwa.org.au \$30 incl postage and packaging.

The Best Way to Protect Your Children is By Giving them a Voice

Sexual violence is not a modern day phenomenon. It is not a reaction to a change in sexual mores and it is not a backlash against feminism. The Torah recounts numerous examples of sexual abuse and forbidden sexual relationships. In Genesis, Parashat Vayishlach, the Torah relates to us the story of Dina, the only daughter of Jacob and Leah. The first line of the story recounts for us that Dina "went out...to look upon the daughters of the land". From then on we are told only what is done to her: she is raped by Prince Shechem and her brothers Shimon and Levi took vengeance by slaying every male of the city. Some Rabbinical sources subtly (and not so subtly) blame Dina for what subsequently befalls her because she freely chose to leave the camp. Some say that Shechem's violation of Dina was a form of punishment for the transgressions of Jacob. What is most obvious is that in the story Dina has no voice. We never learn why she left the camp, how she felt about being abducted and raped, whether or not she wanted to marry Shechem, and how she felt about her brothers' outrage and revenge. We are told nothing about her relationship with her father, her mother, her brothers and the other women of the camp. This deafening "silence", the lack of supportive familial relationship and victim blaming is what characterizes families whose children are at risk for myriad calamitous experiences, including sexual abuse.

When people I meet learn that I am the resource coordinator of the Haifa Rape Crisis Center, their first question is how they, as parents, can best protect their children from being sexually abused. And my answer is always the same: a good relationship with your children, one in which there is healthy communication, trust and support is the best way to protect them - not only from sexual abuse, but also from many of the world's dangers.

The statistics are frightening: one out of four women and one out of eight men will

be sexually abused during their lifetime, the majority during their childhood. In order to protect their children, parents typically tell them to be wary of strangers. But in the case of sexual abuse, it is not strangers that primarily need to be feared. The media frequently reinforces the myth the majority of sexual abuse is perpetrated by strangers. However 80%-90% of all cases of sexual abuse is committed by people we know: family members, boyfriends, neighbors, teachers, youth leaders, sport coaches etc. People who have day to day access to children.

Frequently, in order to bring up well behaved, disciplined children, we teach them from a young age to do what they are told, not to argue with their elders or people in place of authority, including us, their parents. However, in order to empower them to know that when something doesn't feel right they can say NO!, we have the responsibility to teach that sometimes it is appropriate to say no, even to us.

From age three or so (each parent needs to be aware to the developmental abilities and needs of his own child), children can learn to soap themselves up in the bath/shower while learning that their body is their own and that there are private parts (the parts we cover up with clothes) that no one has a right to touch or ask them to touch. Of course it can be explained that sometimes a doctor may need to examine them etc. It is important to teach our children about good touch (touch that makes us feel protected and loved) and bad touch (touch that makes us feel uncomfortable or confused). This includes not forcing our children to kiss or hug visiting grandparents and family members if they don't want to. They need to know that it is OK to say no.

It is of utmost importance to encourage meaningful conversation with our children, to ask questions, take interest in their day-to-day lives and to encourage them to share

with us their successes and their difficulties. One of the biggest problems is that once a child has been abused, they will often not tell and they are thereby at risk for ongoing abuse. Children (and adults) don't tell because they may not understand what has happened, they may believe they are at fault and will be blamed, they may believe that parents will get angry at them if they tell, or that no one will believe them and sometimes they have been threatened by violence if they should tell. When they come home from kindergarten, school, a friend's house, ask them how their day went. If all is well, be happy with them and for them. If there was some problem, ask what happened, how they feel about it, if they wished they had done something differently and if they would like you to intervene.

No matter what your children have done, praise them for having shared their experience with you and let them know that you are always available to talk and to help. This gives your children the message that they can talk about anything with you, that you will listen and believe them and will provide support and guidance if they need it. As your children developmentally progress, the nature of your discussions with them will change, but the message is always the same: it is their body, they don't have to do anything with it that they don't want to and that you as parents are always interested in hearing about what is going on in their life and are always there for them.

Parents play a fundamental role in bringing up empowered, assertive and interpersonally respectful children and youth. Parents should never underestimate their ability to make the world a healthier and violence free place for their children and others.

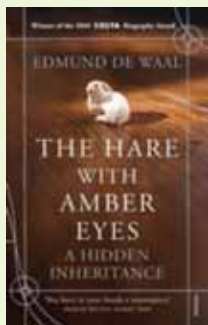
Dr. Shira Sanders, Resource Coordinator at the Haifa Rape Crisis Center.

This article was originally published in the Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle.



Photo of HRCC Staff

Book Club – *The Hare With Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance*



“*The Hare with Amber Eyes*”? What can that possibly be about, I asked myself when I first heard the title. With many around me referring to the book in excited tones and friends telling me I should read it, I finally did. What a rewarding experience. It is one of those books you don't want to put

down; you look for a free hour to read on.

The author, a potter of fame and sensitivity, yet neither a writer nor a Jew, sets out on a mission to reconstruct the history of a collection he has just inherited from his great-uncle in Japan. The collection consists of 264 Japanese figurines, known as netsuke. And the journey of discovery which Edmund de Waal embarks on brings to life, not only his Jewish ancestors, not only the role which Jews played in

some European cities but also his own growing awareness of Jewish history over the last 150 years, the period of Jewish emancipation in Europe. And de Waal writes well.

I found this family saga fascinating on many levels. The artist in de Waal presents the art collections of his ancestor in *fin de siècle* Paris with meticulous and well researched detail. As de Waal follows the migration of the netsuke and the fortunes of the Jewish banking family Ephrussi, their ascent into society and descent into near annihilation, he confronts all those issues which face us Jews: anti-Semitism, Jewish integration into general society, the attraction of the open world to Jews and their assimilation, the attempts many Jewish families made after the war to recover lost and stolen assets, property and art treasures.

And the book is well constructed moving from city to city, from country

to country, from continent to continent. The author's personal journey made an impact on me. He came to understand the meaning of being Jewish in Europe in those days.

Two issues disturbed me. Firstly, I found the attempt by Jews, in this case German and Austrian Jews, to enter the *salons* of society very sad as it always ended in cruel rejection and loss of identity. Secondly I was irritated by the Baroness Emmy Ephrussi - and that was before I read what her daughter said about her. I think I don't like the genre of woman who lives so much with the external. Her toilette absorbs her completely and she so desperately wants to be accepted by 'high society'!

Do read the book and let me know what I missed out on, where I misunderstood and why I reacted as I did!

Danielle Charak OAM

*Written by Edmund de Waal; Published by Chatto & Windus, Great Britain, 2010

Preserving Material Heritage – Not Just for Posterity



When I was Director of the Jewish Museum of Australia many ethno-specific communities approached me seeking advice regarding the establishment of a museum to tell their own story in their own words with their own material heritage. The need of these communities to preserve and present their specific cultural material arises from their appreciation of the value of their particular material heritage in maintaining a sense of community pride and identity within their cultural group. At the same time, their material also reflects the particular journey that their community undertook to leave their country of origin and settle in Australia and to become Australians, to be an integral part of this pluralist, multicultural country.

The desire for specific ethnic groups to establish their own museums is born of their need to tell their own story, to own their own story. The documents, photographs, archives and objects that they hold, only tell their own story if interpreted by them, appreciating their contextual meanings, their nuances, and their particular cultural references.

Community archives and material heritage play an unquestionable role in its community identity formation and construction. One of reasons why the material should remain the property of the community itself is because of the nexus of heritage and community memory and identity. This material loses its potency if it is separated from its communal context. Further, there are concerns about handing over the material to other public institutions including fear of tokenism, fear of appropriation, assimilation and misrepresentation.

Nonetheless, there are practical and theoretical arguments against the establishment of a multitude of ethno-specific museums in Victoria, the population of which includes an estimated 230 different ethnicities among its residents and at the same time is already home to some 740 museums.

On a practical level, there is the challenge of ongoing sustainability. While it seems that mounting a successful initial capital campaign to buy a building is not too difficult, finding the necessary annual funding to support the operations of the Museum and to find the right people to replace aging volunteers and to provide an increasingly sophisticated understanding of today's technology for the documentation and digitisation of collections is a great challenge. There is also a serious theoretical consideration - a concern about the ghettoization of the different cultural groups that make up our pluralist state.

In 2011 Arts Victoria supported a project entitled an Initial Scoping Study of Victoria's Multicultural Collections, Including a Pilot For Scoping of Collection Material, Stories and Access. Stage 1 created a database of 55 organizations likely to hold collections; assessed the professional assistance community groups might need to document and preserve this precious material - by working with 3 pilot groups from the Vietnamese, Turkish and Ukrainian communities; and also established an appropriate methodology for the documentation of these collections.

The purpose of Stage 2 is to obtain a clear and full picture of the extent, the condition and the significance of all the immigration and settlement collections held by ethno-specific groups in Victoria. It is also to provide professional support to these groups to enable them to preserve and document their collections for their descendents and for all those who appreciate Victoria's immigration and settlement history.

Currently I am employed as a consultant by Museums Australia (Vic) to offer Ethnic Groups free training in documentation, cataloguing, story collection and preservation storage. This project offers a unique opportunity to ethnic groups to provide assistance with the maintenance of their own history and heritage.

DR HELEN LIGHT

Based on a paper delivered to the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Conference 20th November 2012

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY



The International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

The Jewish World has long commemorated the Holocaust on Yom HaShoah. On the 27th Nisan, the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the sound of a siren (at sundown and 11am) stops traffic and pedestrians throughout Israel for two minutes of silent devotion. Throughout the Galut, memorial services and commemorative educational programs are commonplace. This is a day to remember and to ponder the big questions such as: how can one be a believing Jew after the Holocaust; where was God, anyway; can one ever again have faith in humanity again.

Although there is no universal agreement about the way in which Yom HaShoah should be observed,

there have been a number of moves to compose special liturgy for Yom HaShoah. The Reform movement published *Six Days of Destruction*, co-authored by Elie Wiesel and Rabbi Albert Friedlander, to be used as a text in services. The Conservative movement has produced *Megillat Hashoah*, which contains personal recollections of Holocaust survivors written in biblical style. A modern Orthodox rabbi, Rabbi Avraham (Avi) Weiss, has written a special Haggadah for a Yom HaShoah seder, to retell the story of the Holocaust. Many have suggested observance should include fasting.

So, given the importance of Yom HaShoah to Jews worldwide, why has the United Nations established January 27 as International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust? The Memorial Day is intended to remember Jewish victims of Nazism – not the Roma, the homosexuals or the people with disabilities who were also killed in vast numbers by the Nazis. Do we need another day to remember? Is this just the UN making a symbolic gesture? After all, Yom HaShoah has been observed since the 1950s!

While I remain sceptical about the UN and about International Days, perhaps there is something in this. Except in Australia, where our almost simultaneous national celebrations at the beach will always take priority, the International Day may provide a focus for Holocaust remembrance and genocide prevention. To my mind it would have been more apt if this day was generalised to remember victims of other genocides – Cambodia, Rwanda, Yugoslavia. And in Australia to consider how close the assimilation policies and actions leading to the Stolen Generation were to acts of genocide.

However, if the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is an occasion for non-Jews to gain some insight into the Jewish experience, perhaps even of the relationship between antisemitism, hatred and genocide, then it may be worthwhile. Even more importantly, if the Day provides an opportunity to look dispassionately at Holocaust denial and what is now being discussed as 'Holocaust obsession' and to act to combat it, then the Day is worthy of our support.

Melinda Jones

ISRAELIS STANDING UP FOR THEIR BELIEFS



Naomi Chazan

Relatively recently, I had the privilege to meet both Anat Hoffman and Naomi Chazan in Israel. These two inspirational women are shedding the light of their integrity and sharing their values to drive change in our world.

I met with Anat, having arranged to interview her for the last NCJWA Quadrennial Conference.

Anat is the Executive Director of the *Israel Religious Action Center* (IRAC), the public and religious advocacy arm of the Reform Movement in Israel, which defends freedoms of conscience, faith and religion. The organisation is the preeminent civil and human rights movement in Israel today focusing on issues of religion and state.

Naomi Chazan is the former Deputy Speaker of the Israeli Knesset and currently the Dean of the School of Government and Society at the *Academic College* of Tel Aviv. More pertinent is the capacity in which I met her. Naomi serves as the President of the New Israel Fund (NIF). NIF principles include a dedication to a vision of Israel as a democracy dedicated to the full equality of all its citizens and communities. NIF advances the values of human dignity as outlined in Israel's Declaration of Independence, which it views as key to the long term security and survival of the country.

The road has not been easy for either of these women who have been targeted for

their beliefs and commitment to acting in line with their convictions, no matter the difficulty of the situation.

Following the release of the *Goldstone Report*, the Im Tirtzu movement accused the NIF of being responsible for funding groups that provided 92% of negative references to the IDF. Attacks on the NIF President followed. The *Jerusalem Post* notified Chazan that it would no longer publish her column and an ugly campaign was launched attacking Chazan through billboard posters and advertisements of her with a horn protruding from her forehead.

Israel and the world reeled in horror. Chazan responded by noting: "They're using me to attack in the most blatant way the basic principles of democracy and the values of the Declaration of Independence: values of equality, tolerance, social justice and freedom of speech". Chazan was discomforted by the campaign, but stoic in her commitment to the meaningful values that serve all of Israeli society.

Anat Hoffman has been leading a campaign for women's equity in religious access at The Western Wall. The group, *Women of the Wall*, seek to empower women to raise their voices in prayer, wear a Tallit and read from the Torah at The Western Wall. The ultra-Orthodox, ie those in charge of the area, will not allow women to do so. The Rabbis in charge regularly direct that the police target Anat and her group. While they have been assaulted, spat on and cursed by the Orthodox, no charge has ever stood against a member



Anat Hoffman

of the women's group.

But, on October 16 2012, while conducting a service for over 250 women, Anat was handcuffed, arrested, strip-

searched and left in a police cell overnight. She was not permitted to contact her lawyer. Following this devastating experience Anat's response was, like Naomi's, to focus on the values of women's equity for which she struggles.

One does not need to agree with the politics of either Anat Hoffman or Naomi Chazan to recognise their commitment and offer them respect for their integrity. The strength and character that both women have exemplified have driven their purpose and shown them as outstanding leaders among our Jewish women. Both Anat and Naomi serve as exemplary models to us all. They sustain their internal values, share them with us all and thus fashion society as they lead by example.

Marcia Pinski

More Information http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anat-hoffman/arrested-for-praying-at-western-wall_b_1987099.html

NCJWA IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH



If you believe the rumours, there are lots of doctors in all our families (and lawyers too, yes, I have some of each, and I ask the doctors, and in particular the heart surgeon, to read my articles before publication). So this is not a beat-up on the tribe of Hippocrates, I promise you. It is about information and

choices and responsibilities for 'house' (ie 'body') maintenance.

So here's a house-body analogy: You have a falling-down old Queenslander house, and bring in a Master Builder. 'Please, you have the skills, just fix it!', you say. 'But I can't', says the building Master, 'I don't know the original materials and how good they were, I need help from specialists in things I don't do, I don't have the time as I'm busy and committed to working on so many other projects. And really, building a new house is a breeze compared to this.' Anyhow, you get the idea.

Your doctor's job is to 'process' your claim to his time (your symptoms) as fast as he can, because he is trying to earn a living, and like everybody, doing the best he can with limited time and resources. Here's an idea to help your body fix itself, and to have our candles burning brightly for many years to come. It is NEVER too late!

OILS FOR CHANNUKAH:

Some oils and fats are good for you. There are 4 types: monounsaturates, polyunsaturates, saturated and trans fats. In some circles, higher 'good' fats consumption is seen as preferable to a high sugar/

processed food diet. (I'm firmly in this camp). Think avocados, grass-fed animal fats, high burning-point rice bran oil (keep olive oil for salads, NOT cooking), small quantities dark chocolate, fatty fish, olives, nuts and free-range livers and chicken with some skin on, unreasonable quantities (less if you are trying to lose weight). Yum. Ease off the potatoes and root (starchy) vegetables (and remember, the junk food you crave is your enemy).

Do not ingest trans fat. Do not repeatedly re-heat to high temperature, any cooking oils. Check for trans fat on food labels. Limit your intake of full fat animal products, but if they are your thing (luscious steaks, free range eggs cooked in a bit of butter and rice bran oil together), have them from organic and grass-fed animals. Cut down the carbs and eat a little fat, and you won't feel hungry so soon after eating, as fat has more calories and takes longer to process. Fat can be 20-35% of your kJ intake, with less than 10% saturated fat. But you must lessen the carbs. Ask your doctor, then try it!

No, we can't eat Latkes Unlimited (high carb potatoes), and I'm not advising some weird diet plan that you can't stick to, just suggesting that your body is an amazing responsive machine, and it is worth trying dietary changes (and research shows they will always help you) by giving 'clean' eating a chance (less than 5 ingredients listed on the label), and giving up most 'low fat' anything, as it invariably has less taste, more sugar, or worse, artificial sweeteners. Some low-fat flavoured yoghurts have more sugar than ice cream! My favourite: Jalna Natural or Greek Yoghurt, with a tablespoon frozen raspberries (allowed to thaw, they make it pink and syrupy, frozen they are like pebbles) and half a passionfruit on top. Good protein, good taste.

3 Suggestions: Give up artificial sweeteners (Stevia is better); Lessen your intake of soft drinks, esp the 'diet' variety (sorry to be a nudnik, but these leach calcium from your bones); and eat good quality fats in appropriate quantities for your health.

L'chaim!

Esther Oliver, NCJWA Health Correspondent

Health Correspondent Brings Home Gold



Bulletin health correspondent Esther Oliver, recently won Gold, when she competed in the Pan Pacific Masters Games that were held on the

Gold Coast in early November.

Esther competed in her long time sporting love, rowing. Her success was with four Golds and a Bronze. The rowing was at Coomera Waters. In one of her other events, a double scull rowing fitness time trial, Esther managed a 1st in Australia and 4th for the current World Rankings.

The Games are held biannually and affectionately known as the 'Oldies Olympics', where participants compete in their age group (from 30 years plus). This year's event brought 11,000 PanPac competitors from 16 countries.

Esther is much more than our NCJWA Bulletin Health and Fitness writer. She leads and lives by example, living a healthy and active life including regular exercise. Her pre-games regime of water training at 5am three days a week certainly paid off.

Kol hakavod, Esther!

ICJW

Two ICJW Executive members represented NCJWA at the recent ICJW meeting in Toronto, Canada mid-November – Eva Robey, Asia Pacific Regional Chair and myself. This was the customary half-yearly Executive meeting where the work of the international organisation is reviewed. But this time there was a difference: the second day was wholly devoted to a professionally-run workshoping of the future development of International Council of Jewish Women which has celebrated its one hundredth birthday this year.

There is no doubt that ICJW women in attendance were seeking answers to problems of relevance and shrinking membership in their own affiliates as well as in ICJW affiliation – we are all aware that the interests and lifestyles of C21 women are immensely different to those of our great grandmothers. The challenge to us all is to open new channels within our organisations and attract more women to work with us in our contribution to our communities. We also need to recognise that in the last century overwhelming social problems such as the

abuse of children and people-trafficking continue beneath the polished veneer of everyday life, even in Australia.

At dinner, ICJW women met with Timea Nagy, a 35 year-old Canadian woman who told her unvarnished story of enticement from Hungary as a 19 year-old expecting to become a nanny to a Canadian family. The job description had even included photographs of the children she was to care for. Upon arrival in Canada she was collected by the men who had plotted to get her there and kept for three months as a sexual prisoner before she managed to escape. The follow up to this shocking story is an extraordinary example of the power of one person who has experienced such trauma to turn her life around and assist others. Singlehandedly, with her own money, Timea set up an organisation 'Walk with Me' which she believes is the only such group in Canada, rescuing the victims of trafficking, maintaining and housing them while assisting them to restart their lives.

The shock of hearing such a story was palpable – working against trafficking

continues to be a major aim of ICJW and its affiliates, but few had heard a first-hand report from a survivor, nor had we recognised the elaborate lengths to which perpetrators will go to procure their prey. We were also appalled to learn that many of our countries, as with Canada, have no specialist organisations to rescue, support and rehabilitate victims of trafficking. As well as making personal donations to support Timea's work in Canada, ICJW Executive determined to increase our commitment to eradicating people-trafficking and to supporting victims of this horrific abuse.

May 5-8 2013 ICJW will host the Herczeg Jerusalem Seminar for Jewish Education – the topic is 'Judaism as a Universal Language: Jewish Perspectives on Contemporary Issues.' A group of NCJWA members will attend this seminar which follows the April NCJWA Israel Projects Tour. Please decide to join us! Contact me or Di Hirsh for details.

**Robyn Lenn OAM
ICJW Vice President, Australia**

Defining Human Trafficking

The following formula captures the full scope of exploitation.



END GOAL = EXPLOITATION

Adults: If one condition from each of the three categories is met,
then it can be considered human trafficking.

Children Only Means and Purpose need to be met

Means + Exploitation = Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking, Jewish Historical Writings and Beliefs

Extract from ICJW Human Trafficking Manual, 2012

Where better to start than with the *Tanach*!

Most translations of Hebrew text have translations in the male domain, providing little support for gender equality. In the most part females are described with lesser roles or values. It is important to look at the words with a feminist light. Suddenly the old stories take on a new view.

Gender inequality

Genesis 1:27 "So God created the human beings, creating (them) in the divine image of God (B'tselem Elohim), creating them male and female."

The word 'adam' is not describing an individual, but a new class of beings, a new classification of life.

According to Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, editor of *The Torah, A Women's Commentary*, humanity was established first, preceding our division into sexual categories. In Deuteronomy 29:9, the Torah clearly establishes that the covenant given to Moses is accepted and shared by all Jewish people - men and women.

We have a long history of male interpretation of the Bible. This has led to laws, practices, codes and patterns in which women have been assigned to be of lesser value. This is true, too, of the midrashic (loosely translated as interpretation of the Torah) tradition of the rabbinic era.

Prostitution arose when women, in early societies, were not perceived as human beings made in the image of God.

Slavery

There are many sources throughout our liturgy and texts that direct us to take action against slavery. The biblical references are usually associated with a message of human liberation. Torah policies and regulations deal with enslavement by captivity, sale of children and self-sale to pay off debt.

Isaiah 61:1 "The spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has

anointed me to preach good news to the poor; God has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."

Ecclesiastes 4:1 "Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: and I saw the tears of the oppressed-and they had no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors-and they have no comforter."

Moses Maimonides (the Rambam) was born in 1135 CE. In addition to being a physician, he was Jewish theologian and philosopher. His commentary Mishneh Torah carries significant authority. In the 'Mishna Laws of Gifts to the Poor 8:10/11 he speaks of Pidyon Sh'vuyim - Redemption of the Captives. We are told that this takes precedence over supporting the poor or even clothing them. There is no greater mitzvah than Pidyon Sh'vuyim, for the problems of the captives include hunger, thirst, nakedness, and mortal danger. One who ignores the need to redeem captives is seen to have transgressed. It is not only a physical requirement to address the situation of the captives, it is a moral obligation. As a response to this moral obligation, the ethical path of action through positive living was anticipated.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) states that "in a free society only some are guilty but all are responsible.". Rabbi Heschel the Polish born American theologian, has been considered one of the leading Jewish philosophers of the twentieth century. He marched, in Selma, Alabama USA, with black civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King. In his book 'The Insecurity of Freedom', he discusses his concept of freedom. Paraphrased it is his belief that in a free society each one of us has the right and capacity to be free. "Man, every man is too good to be a slave of another man". Even more telling Freedom is a gift that can be taken away from us".

Pidyon Sh'vuyim, is our obligation to do everything in our power to release people who are trapped and suffering in some way. Human trafficking is modern day slavery, whether it is debt bondage, sex trade, or forced labour. At Passover we remember and recount the story

of our slavery in Egypt. We retell the tale of our release to freedom with the ability to develop self identity.

Many countries have slavery as part of their history. Traditional slavery is still rampant in the 'less developed' nations of the world. It is also important to acknowledge that modern day slavery is also exceedingly common in the developed countries. It just has taken on a different appearance, but is most definitely present.

If it is meaningful to remember our flight from Egypt and renewal at Chanukah. Now consider the rights and freedoms entrenched in the laws of our lands. Contrast this with the real conditions and situations of men, women and children who are merely viewed and used as commodities. It is quite apparent when we look around and see what is happening in the world; children trafficked into being child soldiers, for example- violence and oppression go hand to hand. Victims of trafficking are denied their dignity as persons.

Today, there is an estimate of 27 million people who are victims of modern day slavery.

STOP PRESS On 4th December 2012, three women Nomi Levenkron, a lawyer who specializes in human trafficking; Shoshana Strauss, a lawyer at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor; and Tamar Schwartz, with the advocacy organization Mesilah, were bestowed awards for advocating against human trafficking crimes Israeli President Shimon Peres & Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. President Peres is quoted as saying said. "Human trafficking is the modern day slavery. These people are forced into 'slavery' due to economic or personal problems; They are seen as objects and not as humans. Israel has many achievements in the fight against human trafficking that are important and is marked one of the top countries in the world fighting against this type of organized crime."

Source <http://www.jspace.com/>

News from the Sections

Brisbane



MICHA co-chair person Mira Myler (far right) with Dr. Vera Korine-Shafir and Boaz Herman

The focus of much of our activity this year has been our fundraising for MICHA.

Earlier this year we started a major fundraising raffle to raise money for MICHA. Tickets were sold by NCJWA sections around Australia. The 15 October was the big day with the prize winning ticket being drawn at a Brisbane section meeting.

Our congratulations to Jo Dixon from Canberra who was the lucky winner. Her prize was the hand made embroidered tablecloth (130cm x 224cm), made by Mira Myler.



Canberra's Jo Dixon and her family show her prize from beautiful tablecloth prize from the MICHA Raffle

The raffle and other activities, have in recent months, raised \$1,596. This will be sent by Brisbane section, to MICHA for one of their projects for children with hearing loss.

Our sincere thanks to all NCJWA sections for participating in the fund raising event, for this most worthwhile organisation in Israel.

Mira Myler Co-chairperson MICHA Brisbane has recently been in Israel and visited the MICHA centre during her stay and will report back about her visit at our next meeting

Lorraine Jacobs
MICHA Co-Chairperson Brisbane Section

Canberra

Beautiful Geneva in Switzerland was home to Canberra Steering Committee member and scientist Dr Barbara Butow in May and June 2012 when she was posted to the World Health Organisation (WHO) from Food Standards Australia and New Zealand. At the Canberra Section AGM on Sunday 19 August she provided an overview of the work of WHO's International Food Safety Authorities Network in managing health risks and disease outbreaks caused by food contamination.



L- R: Canberra AGM- Karen Tatz and new steering committee member Yael Cass (photo: Sylvia Deutsch)

Our 2012-2013 Steering Committee, chosen unanimously at the AGM, is: Barbara Butow, Yael Cass (a new member of the committee), Sarit Cohen, Sylvia Deutsch, Janet Frommer, Yvette Goode, Anita Shroot and Karen Tatz.

In an initiative the ACT Jewish community's Matan Batmitzvah program will this year for the first time include a new component where the girls each choose a NCJWA leader (local or beyond) to do research and to prepare a short presentation. This year's six participants have chosen; former National President the late Vera Cohen MBE (so instrumental in setting up and fostering the Canberra Section) and five Canberra leaders, all now deceased: Ruth Dixon, Anne Hoffman, Naomi Kronenberg, Helga Leslie and Betty Rosenberg. We see this as a way of educating both the girls in the community and their mothers about the work of past members of NCJWA and hopefully thereby ensuring support and continuity.



L- R: Canberra AGM - Dr Barbara Butow, Sylvia Deutsch, Karen Tatz, Yvette Goode, Janet Frommer, Sarit Cohen (photo: Julia Wolfson)

Mazal tov to ACT Jewish community President and Canberra NCJWA member Professor Kim Rubenstein on being named in a list of '100 Women of Influence' in the Public Policy category by The Australian Financial Review and Westpac.

On 6 October, Pamela Rothman, our Section representative at the National Council of Women of Australia (NCWA) ACT, represented our National President Di Hirsh at NCWA's national conference dinner.

Our most recent movie night, Yiddische Mama on Sunday 14 October, was a good fundraiser.

Congratulations to local Jo Dixon, who won the embroidered Shabbat tablecloth raffled by Brisbane Section to raise funds for MICHA.

Our final fundraiser for the year was held in early December. This activity was run by Pam Fein as part of a Trash and Treasure day at a local market.

Sylvia Deutsch

Gold Coast



*Our blokes help with the Sizzle
L- R: Michael Schnukal, Barbara Stewart-Kann OAM and Gary Kann*

It's been a busy and active time at NCJWA Gold Coast, including welcome a number of new members to our section.

Our two recent Sausage Sizzles have been a tasty success- judging by the revenue raised!

We were also thrilled that all our tickets for the stage show, Calendar Girls sold out, not to mention it was a great show.

The Gold Coast annual Chanukah in the Park festival will take place on 13 December. NCJWA Gold Coast will be represented by our stall. Our activity will include the giving away of 20 sets of Wesley Books to young parents in our community. These books, have been supplied by NCJWA and deal with issues relating to Parent/Child personal safety as well as bullying. We will also be providing information about NCJWA for prospective members and having some membership forms on hand.

News from the Sections



AGM speaker David Samson

At our AGM in October our guest speaker was David Samson. David works in Australia for Sar El. This Israeli organisation manages and coordinates hands on volunteer programs for visitors to Israel. His talk was

inspirational. Some of our members have taken the plunge to be volunteers on the program.

As the calendar year draws to a close we are looking at where our annual donations will go, both to the wider and Jewish community. This year beneficiaries will include:

Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation

Temple Shalom

Gold Coast Jewish Community Services

Magen David Adom

Heart Foundation

Cancer Fund

Volunteer Marine Rescue

Hopewell Hospice

Amongst others.....

Our hearts and prayers are with Israel. We wish everyone a happy and safe Chanukah,

With Council greetings
Tammy Raanan-Ota

For information about Sar El visit

*www.sarelaustralia.org or
contact David Samson david@sarelaustralia.org 0429-236160*

New South Wales

It's been a busy period with a number of us representing NCJWA NSW at various Jewish and wider community functions.

Thank you to Dalia Ayalon Sinclair, Immediate Past President, Vice President Sunny Gold, Josephine Holland and Bernice Bachmayer, for their attendance at the Raoul Wallenberg Commemoration and the Marie Bashir Peace Presentation both held at Parliament House (NSW) as well as the St David's Interfaith Day of Peace.

Our Transcultural event co-ordinated by Rob Lenn OAM was a great success. Jeanette Tsoulos, President of the Jewish Genealogical Society presented a fascinating talk, 'Finding You Family' followed by a research session. A beautiful lunch in the Succah, organised by Vice President Anne Reid and Zina Conway OAM, followed.



Transcultural Succoth event L-R: Julie Levine, Jeannette Tsoulos, Tamar Mansberg

Our annual PINK SUNDAY was a happy, family and community event. Most of the fundraising had been achieved before the event with our stationary bike ride activity. Those who had pre-registered and collected sponsorship via the My Cause website included the Deputy Mayor of Woollahra, Katherine O'Regan. On the morning of our event she took her bike ride, spurred on by friends and the general crowd.



*At Pink Sunday
L-R: David & Josephine Holland with son Tobey*

The event attracted a wide range of ages from 12 to over 90, breast cancer survivors, family, friends and those eager to take part, raise awareness and fundraise.

During the morning both Pink silhouettes and Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) pins were sold. A 'silent auction' of the stationary bikes, was also held. Our Pink Pooch competition attracted a number of children and family participants and was judged by the Deputy Mayor and overseen by Mayor Andrew Petrie.

All activities were made more enjoyable thanks to the Barista Cart, generously donated by Daniel Borenstein's Event Group Australia Pty Ltd. The much needed morning coffee was accompanied by fresh scones made that morning by Anne and Zina in our Pink Café. All present had plenty of opportunity to shmooze and catch up.



*Getting into the family spirit at Pink Sunday
Back L-R: Jeremy Reid, Tammi Reid, Anne Reid, Sarah Reid Front L-R: Jamie Reid, Ashley Reid, Sherydan Reid*

All our activities, combined with the BCNA collection tins distributed to shops a month prior to the event, jointly raised over \$12,000.

Our MUM FOR MUM volunteers recently were hosted by the Royal Hospital For Women (RHW) Social Work Department and mid-wives, to meet and share their experiences. Julia Crowe, RHW social worker spoke of the 'invaluable grass roots service' provided by the MUM FOR MUM program and volunteers.

I am thrilled to welcome member Dr Yoke Berry to our active volunteer team as archivist and assisting our MUM FOR MUM co-ordinator, Nadene Alhadeff with administration.

We are also pleased and grateful that we have received much needed JCA grants towards our MUM FOR MUM program and Jewish Womens' Breast Cancer Network (JWBCN).

In recent months we have all learnt much from the Jewish Board of Deputies 'Talking About Israel Course' which we hosted. This was a fitting lead up to our 'Celebrating Israel, panel, Q and A evening.

On Tuesday 6 November we held a fully booked and successful Progressive Group Melbourne Cup Lunch. Thanks to who made this happen and everyone who joined in the fun.

We officially welcomed Miriam Levy who has been invited and who has accepted to serve on our Elected Board.

We were all deeply saddened by the passing of our dear Life Member, Nona Rosenbaum on 31 October, a warm, dedicated, and much loved member of NCJWA NSW and proud daughter of Gladys Slutzkin NCJWA President (Victoria) for many years. We wish her family long life. She will be sadly missed by the whole NCJWA family.

Victoria Nadel
President NCJWA NSW Division

News from the Sections

South Australia

At our October meeting we welcomed a new member Jill Hall. Jill has been attending our meetings for a while and it is now great to welcome her a s fully fledged NCJWA member.



All hats for Cup Day

Instead of having a Melbourne Cup Lunch we decided to have an Afternoon Tea, which was attended by 40-50 members and friends. All present enjoyed a very delicious spread whilst watching the race. Members were very generous and bought raffle tickets and sweep tickets. All profits were donated to ILAN.



Melbourne Cup Day fun

Our final meeting of the year was on Wednesday 5 December and we will resume in February 2013. Wishing all members and friends a very happy Chanukah, and a very happy and healthy holiday.

Ruth Dunn
Hon Secretary NCJWA SA

Victoria



Malvina Malinek OAM, Ernie Malinek & Susie Balint at the Israel Kaleidoscope 2012 night

We have had a busy few months over the spectrum of all our programs. The Chagim with our Golden Age Club participants were stimulating and interesting; new volunteers

are currently enthusiastically participating in the introductory training for the MUM FOR MUM program; participants in our Empowering Single Women's program have successfully completed a course in Creating Effective Relationships.



ILAN variety concert, Access Drumming Group

variety concert organised by Shirley Glance, Vice President, Ruth Krawat and friends for our ILAN project.

On 15 October, former National NCJWA president Malvina Malinek OAM gave us an insight into the news behind the news with her informative presentation on 'Israel Kaleidoscope 2012'.

Fundraising functions have included our annual Pink Ribbon Breakfast held together with WIZO Victoria on 28 October. Funds were raised for the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Also on 28 October function held with the family of Dr Geulah Solomon OAM z"l and the Makor Library, launching Geulah's memoirs 'My Life, My History, My Legacy, a Jewish Australian Journey' which was warmly received by family, friends and the community.

Our 85th anniversary Gala Lunch was held on 20 November. Our Guest Speaker was Professor Caroline Taylor AM, Foundation Chair in Social Justice and Head of the Social Justice Research Centre at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. She spoke to a full house, on 'A Fact is not Fate – Creating a Meaningful Life from Childhood Abuse'. We are grateful to our volunteers who spent hours phoning members for a commitment as a benefactor, patron or hostess of the function.

In recent months we were able to provide a 35 day placement for Fiona Zlotnik, a Social Science student from RMIT. She was primarily supervised by Annette Sweet, our Executive Director. Fiona was introduced to all aspects of our organisation and at the conclusion of her placement was able to correlate our work and program areas with governmental social policy. She also developed an understanding of NCJWA (VIC) and contributed to and participated in activities and programs. She was an asset during her time with us and at the conclusion of her placement addressed the Board.

Vivien Brass
President NCJWA Vic Division

Western Australia

This year the NCJWA Women Achievers night, held on Sunday 26 August, was a big success. This special evening has been held in Perth biannually since 1993. We acknowledge the accomplishments of women in the wider WA community.

The evening begun with the excellent Master of Ceremonies Sue Wilner, who welcomed guests and spoke about NCJWA and its main projects around Australia.

The first Achiever was Police Commander Michelle Fyfe, the 2012 Australian Police Medal recipient, who was celebrated for being an active role model for women in the police force.



Biennial NCJWA Women Achievers

L - R: Noreen Sher, Jill Green, Ester Steingiesser, Di Hirsh OAM, Ruth Simms, Dr Dawn Butterworth.

The second Achiever was Alisa Krasnostein, water engineer by day and science fiction, horror publisher by night. In 2007 she founded independent publishing company Twelfth Planet Press. In 2011 she received the World Fantasy Award.

Our special guest speaker was NCJWA national President Di Hirsh then gave an overview of the purpose of NCJWA and the role the council plays in promoting the status of Jewish women and women in the wider community.

The final 2012 Achiever was Susan Cromb, a teacher who founded the "Adopt A School" project in 2002 to set up sister schools to improve communication and cultural understanding between Indonesians and Australians.

Guests enjoyed a kosher supper of delicious finger food and irresistible profiteroles and biscuits made by Bronia Sharp, Fay Enston and a group of talented ladies from Yael Group. Our thanks to the organisers of this very successful event, Jill Green, Noreen Sher and Ester Steingiesser and for the great support from Joan Motta and Maggie Helfgott-Fisher.

In September Ester Steingiesser attended the launch of cooperation between NCWWA and the new African Women's Council of Australia (AWCoA). The AWCoA recently received a grant which has enabled them to establishment an office in Perth. They are very welcoming and we are proud of being Jewish community representative at their special event.



*Participants in the Interfaith Event for World PeaceL
- R: Jesse Sharp, Estee Todres, students from the
Australian Islamic College*

On the 21 September to celebrate the International Peace Day, NCJWA WA in partnership with Brahma Kumaris WA and with UNAOWA organised an special Interfaith Event for World Peace. The ceremony was held at the beautiful Peace Grove in East Perth, erected in honour of Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin of Israel z"l, and President Anwar al Sadat from Egypt. Both men were Nobel Peace Prize winners who were later assassinated because of their courageous efforts for Peace. This memorial was the initiative of JNF WA, some years ago.

Richard Farago, a former JNF WA President, was our guest speaker. We had prayers for Peace from the Muslim, Jewish, Baha'i, Buddhist and Universal Brotherhood representatives. There were also Peace songs in Arabic, by the girls of the Australian Islamic College and in Hebrew, by Estee Todres and Jesse Sharp.

We once again were involved with the UNAOWA Yolande Frank Art Competition. Congratulations to Milla Lemer and to Sarah Tucker, Carmel School students. Both received a Highly Commended Prize. This is the third year that the UNAOWA WA is organising an award in the memory of Yolande Frank through A Creative Expression of the Declaration of Human Rights. This year article 26 of the Declaration was the basis for the children's work- 'Everyone has the right to education'. Judith Parker AM DCSJ, past President of UNAOWA and Ester Steingieser, UNAOWA Executive member representing NCJWA were very happy to present them with their prizes. Kol hakavod girls!

Kol hakavod also to our two seniors groups Gilad and Shalom who continue to be active and creative. You are all an inspiration to us! Meanwhile Natanya group has hosted some very entertaining Musical Afternoons, with the final one for the year in December. Our Yael Group has also held successful meetings, the last one was a great Melbourne Cup Lunch. Thanks to Bronia Sharp for her fantastic hospitality and the delicious food she served with the help of Ros Bettane, Barbara Buchbinder and Michal Kooperman.

We all wish Angela Davis a speedy recovery. We miss her clever and positive presence so much. We are looking forward in having her back very soon.

Finally, Mazal Tov to the lucky mothers Di Hirsh, Angela Davis and Ester Steingieser that are having their daughters weddings this December!!! Ester has an added bonus, her son's wedding in January in Israel!

Ester Steingieser

PUTTING WOMEN ON THE AGENDA



Key Issues to Raise With Israeli Officials and to Be Used Communitywide.

Jewish organizations are justly proud of Israel's strong democratic values and its legal and ethical commitment to inclusion and equality.

Indeed, many of our communities have rallied to oppose those who seek to demonize Israel and distort its democratic foundation and record.

With these fundamental values in mind, many of our communities have promoted enhanced Israeli government attention to issues such as religious pluralism, Ethiopian absorption, Israeli Arabs and African migrants.

It is extremely important that Jews must now convey to Israeli leaders our deep concern at ever-increasing efforts to impose gender segregation in public secular places, including public buses, sidewalks, roadways, buildings and government events and convocations.

- Recognizing Israel's commitment to gender equality and efforts to advance the status of women, it is important that Jewish organizations make clear to Israeli leaders our opposition to forced gender segregation in public, secular places and urge that there be effective enforcement of laws that forbid gender segregation in public secular spaces in Israel. Israeli law upholds equality and bars

discrimination. The Israeli Supreme Court has ruled that the practice of forced gender segregation on public buses is illegal.

- Enforced gender segregation in public spaces is inconsistent with Israel's founding principles of equality for all regardless of "race, creed, or sex" and has been ruled illegal by Israel's Supreme court. Every person, regardless of gender, deserves equal access and use of public services and public secular spaces
- In order to reinforce Israel's strategic interests and international alliances as well as the country's internal and external security, it is incumbent on the Israeli government and Israel's supporters around the world to work vigorously to maintain, enhance and defend Israel's democratic integrity and ensure equality and justice for all its citizens.

This statement was first written by Susan Heller Pinto of the ADL from observations made at the meeting of the Women's Roundtable on September 13, 2012. It has been minimally edited to be more global in its references.



The Jewish National Fund of Australia

Salutes the The National Council of Jewish Women of Australia

on the completion of the playground at Park Golda in the Negev which site forms a part of the Historic ANZAC TRAIL

JNF thank all NCJWA supporters whose contributions have ensured that projects such as these become reality.

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Upcoming Events

BRISBANE

22nd February Cocktail Party For more information contact Carolyn on 3345 9509

NSW

31st January Tu B' Sh'vat- Volunteer Morning Tea and presentation, Guest speaker, Nutritionist Anne Lewinsky.

11th February- First Jewish Women's Bookclub meeting for 2013 with Jewish Women specialists in Status of Women issues.

March- Visit to Gallipoli Mosque and lunch as part of our Transcultural Program.
(date to be set)

21st March – Champagne, Art and Culture evening with Sotheby's at Fanny Reading Council House.

VICTORIA

18th February commencement of '10 weeks, 10 women, 10 stories' writing course with author Nancy Sugarman

12th March: Interfaith Women's Seder

9th April: Hold the date for Annual fundraising Brunch

God in 3D comes to Canada

A remarkable event took place in Montreal, Canada in November and I had the opportunity to attend it, marvelling at the bonhomie of the capacity audience in the new Montreal Place des Artes complex.

The finale to the two week-long 13th Annual Arab World Festival of Montreal was entitled 'God in 3 D', an extraordinary meeting of the three Abrahamic faiths in a polished, oratorio-like production, two and a half hours in length.

With 26 male performers on stage throughout, the performance was led by a Jewish cantor, a Muslim singer and a trio of Christian monk-like choristers. An instrumental body comprised six performers – the traditional Arabic ensemble of oud, ney, qanoun and violin, with a tabla. Additionally one of the three Jewish performers was a violinist as well as a singer and supplied a Hebraic lament ahead of accompanying the cantor in a traditional prayer.

Eight members of the Burdah Ensemble from the Soufi centre supplied the rhythmic and harmonic support as did the four members of the Whirling Dervishes of Aleppo, who then rose and closed each half of the performance with an astounding ten minutes' whirling dance.

Throughout the evening a monk moved around the large stage swinging his censer of incense on a long chain – by the end of the performance the theatre was clouded with its perfume. The juxtaposition of the monk's movements on the prayers of the cantor and the calls of Islam created amazement in my mind – such a seamless blending of the three traditions was unimaginable! Similarly, when the three faith leaders moved to the front of the stage and formed into a three sided group to sing and then embrace one another, the audience were wild with enthusiasm.

All performers sang in the language of their faith – thus Hebrew, Arabic and Latin retained the veracity of each prayer, but the cleverness of the musical score allowed the singers of each faith to support the others harmonically without uttering a word of the other languages. The lengthy polished presentation moved along without breaks between its sections, all without the aid of a conductor.

I feel very fortunate to have been present at this outstanding interfaith event, quite outside my experience of goodwill and accord between the three faiths.

Robyn Lenn OAM
NCJWA Chair, Interfaith/ Intercultural